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THE RISE AND EARLY HISTORY OF
POLITICAL PARTIES IN
OREGON—IV

By Walter Carleton Woodward

CHAPTER VIII

DEMOCRATIC DISCORD

The process of division in the Oregon Democracy along lines drawn by the interpretations of the Dred Scott decision had begun before the close of 1857. But the local factional differences were to overshadow the growing national schism for some months yet to come. The breach between the machine and the independent Democrats had been steadily growing wider. Revolt against the iron-clad, caucus sovereignty rule of the Clique and protest against the exploitation of the party for the personal benefit of a small coterie of politicians, were the principal bases for the attack against the Organization. At the beginning of the year 1858 it was evident that a complete split in the party was imminent.

In announcing to his readers that a movement was being launched whereby a new party was to come to light, Bush noted the fact that ever since the organization of the party in Oregon, there had been a faction, which, while adhering to the name, had never possessed the character of Democrats. "This mixed opposition have always blown the same whistle and beaten the same drum—always whining and whanging about the 'Salem Cli-que,—the 'Salem Platform,' 'hidden caucus' or 'secret cabal.' This party, whatever its name, is the same old opposition, which, like the snake, sheds its skin annually, but at the same time adds a rattle to its tail."¹

The gauntlet was thrown down by nine anti-organization Democratic members of the legislature of 1857-'58, who met and called a convention of "National Democrats" to meet at Eugene, April 8, for the purpose of nominating candidates for state officers. The nine men signing the call were: Wm. M. King, Multnomah; J. H. Slater, Benton; Nathaniel Ford, Polk and Tillamook; Thos. Scott, Yamhill and Clatsop; F. A. Collard, Geo. Rees and S. P. Gilliland, Clackamas; Wm. Allen and A. Shuck, Yamhill.²

¹Statesman editorial—"A New Move—The Old Snake in a New Skin." Feb. 2, 1858.

²Oregonian, Feb. 6.

"Where 'Nationalism' Tends—Are You Prepared to Go Into the Black Republican Camp?"—was the caption of an editorial in which Bush urged all Democrats to think well before they made up their mind to "leave the old Democratic flag" to join "this National-wool party—this Eugene Negro equality movement."¹ As a matter of fact, some of the most pronounced pro-slavery advocates were numbered among the Nationals and this editorial is an excellent example of Bush's habit of begging the question and befogging the issue, to meet his own purposes. The bitter factional feeling existing among the Democrats is illustrated by the resolutions adopted by the regular Linn county convention and introduced by Delazon Smith, the "Lion of Linn." The Nationals were referred to as "certain malcontents" and "traitors" without honest devotion to principle or sympathy with the Democratic party, who were determined to ruin where they could not rule. Therefore "we utterly repudiate and denounce the miserable, soft faction, self-styled 'National Democrats' * * * We will never again admit them into our confidence as Democrats, until they shall have adopted the ancient mode of purification—washed seven times."²

On the other hand, an honest effort was made in some cases to meet the charges of Clique or boss rule, by a more adequate and practical method than that of vilification. In this connection it is exceedingly interesting to note that Clackamas county Democrats inaugurated and carried through a complete system of direct primary nominations in the spring of 1858. It was apparently as thorough an embodiment of the Direct Primary ideal as that so vigorously acclaimed in Oregon a half century later.³ Naturally, this reaction against close political organ-

¹Statesman, March 16.

²Ibid.

³The plan is outlined in the following resolution: "In order to ascertain the wish of the Democratic voters of Clackamas county, fully, fairly and justly expressed, in relation to all county officers, it is recommended that every Democrat, in a meeting to be held in his precinct, proceed to vote for such nominees as he may prefer to be supported by the Democratic party of this county." Provision is made for transmitting the votes to the chairman of the county committee and for the canvassing of the vote so returned. Those persons obtaining the highest number of votes were to be declared "as the unanimous nominees of the party." Gov. Geo. L. Curry was chairman of the Convention, March 13, which inaugurated the plan. The report of the Clackamas county nominations, given in the Statesman, May 18, shows that the scheme was carried through as planned.

ization was most pronounced among the opposition. The Clatsop county Republicans declared in convention that "whoever is a loyal partisan, of whatever party, is no patriot." In accordance with this sentiment, they stated that they acknowledged no allegiance to the Republican party, further than it should adhere to its avowed principles.¹ The Yamhill Republicans announced that while believing in the propriety of party organization, they were diametrically opposed to any partisan usage that tended to paralyze the will of the citizens.²

The first Democratic convention for the nomination of state officers met March 16.³ It reaffirmed the Kansas-Nebraska doctrine of squatter sovereignty in one resolution of its platform and in the next endorsed the Dred Scott decision "as an authoritative and binding exposition!" President Buchanan was warmly endorsed, leaving the inference that he, in his coercive, Lecompton constitution policy in Kansas was to be supported rather than Douglas, who stood out for that "Kansas-Nebraska doctrine" for which the convention so strongly declared! The famous fifth resolution adopted the year before was reaffirmed. The assembled Democrats, to add the cap sheaf to their illogical resolutions, proceeded to "hail with gratification the efforts of the Democratic Administration to initiate the construction of the Pacific Railroad" and earnestly called upon Congress to "exercise all its constitutional powers to forward the great enterprise of the age."⁴ L. F. Grover, a member of the Salem Clique, received the nomination for Congressman, and John Whiteaker, an irreconcilable, pro-slavery man, was nominated for Governor. Bush, who had been elected from year to year by the legislature as Territorial Printer, was nominated for State Printer. This gave him his first opportunity for personal vindication at the hands of the people, in the face of the attacks made upon him as political autocrat and tyrant.

¹Argus, March 20.

²Ibid., March 27.

³The different party organizations nominated state tickets in the spring of 1858, so that state government could be put in operation as soon as Congress should pass an act admitting Oregon into the Union. However, members were elected as usual to the Territorial legislature at the June election at the same time that a state legislative assembly was chosen, in view of the fact that Congress might delay action in the matter.

⁴Statesman, March 23.

The platform adopted by the Nationals in their convention at Eugene differed but slightly from that of the Organization, on National issues. However, after endorsing the Administration of President Buchanan, the convention affirmed its belief "in the cardinal principles of popular sovereignty and in the right of the people of the Territories * * * to frame and adopt their constitutions and all local laws for their own government," etc. This could easily be taken as a defense of Douglas in his break with Buchanan over the Lecompton constitution, and it was so charged by Bush.¹ The point of issue between the Oregon Democrats was given in the following resolution: "We reassert the great principles of the right of the represented to instruct the representative and proclaim it the bounden (duty) of the representative to obey the instructions of his constituents or resign whatever position he may at that time hold."² This was a direct contradiction of the principles of caucus rule pronounced in the notorious fifth and sixth resolutions of the Democratic platform of 1857. E. M. Barnum was named for Governor. James K. Kelly was nominated for Congressman, and at the same time a resolution was passed endorsing the record of Lane as delegate! This endorsement of Lane by the insurgent wing of the Oregon Democracy, is suggestive of his adroitness in steering clear of factional difficulties and of his continued popularity with Oregon Democrats.

Those who had been looking to the National Democrats to take issue with their opponents on national issues were disappointed. In comment upon their platform, the *Argus*, which had been accused of "honey-fugling" the Nationals, declared that not a single issue was made with the Salem dynasty upon the great question convulsing the nation, in regard to the right of the people of a Territory to adopt or reject a constitution before it should be fastened upon them by Congress.³

The schism in the Democratic party placed the Opposition (Republicans and Whigs) in a new and delicate situation.

¹Ibid., April 13.

²Oregonian, April 17.

³Argus, April 17.

Republican organization which had been started aggressively in 1856, had not been followed up. The Free State Republican convention had been held early in 1857, at which time the principles of the new party had been promulgated, but no Territorial ticket had been nominated and practically no effort had been made to maintain a distinct party organization in the campaign. Dryer's attitude of semi-hostility toward the nascent party had been influential in preventing many Whigs from joining it and it still felt its weakness in numbers. The threats of the Democrats to introduce slavery if the Black Republicans should attempt to abolitionize Oregon led the timid to be conservative as to the expediency of aggressive efforts. With some Republicans, the advocacy of nobly conceived principles was the ruling motive. With others, the controlling ambition was to overthrow the Democratic machine in Oregon. The latter saw their opportunity in 1858 and were in favor of going to the assistance of the National Democrats and of further postponing active Republican organization. These conditions are illustrated in the press and in the proceedings of conventions in the spring of 1858.

In a leader, "What Has Been and What Is to Be," Adams called attention to the surprisingly large vote against slavery in November, 1857, and attributed it to fearless agitation of the subject.¹ And this, despite the warning of the Democrats, which "so intimidated many weak-backed Republicans that they fairly quailed before the imaginary danger of 'agitation' and some of them strongly recommended us to let the Albany convention go by default, even after the call had been published throughout the Territory." Adams accordingly exhorted Republicans to declare themselves boldly, asserting that there was but one great issue before the people; that "there is a bigger fight on hand than the present squabble between Leland² and Bush." He clearly manifested his anxiety to prevent Republicans allying themselves with the Nationals, whose principles he declared in the main to be "equally black,

¹Argus, Dec. 19, 1857.

²Editor of the Democratic Standard, the organ of the "soft" or National Democrats. He was succeeded about this time by James O'Meara.

equally damnable" with those of the Clique. Perceiving that the National Democratic organization must be temporary, he urged Republicans to "put their house in order and make preparations for comfortably housing those who, after escaping from Babylon, will want a Jerusalem to flee to. Republicans never need look for many deserters from the ranks of the foe as long as they have no more comfortable quarters to invite them into than an area covered by a few slab seats under a fir tree.¹

While Dryer had not yet espoused Republicanism, he was as zealous as Adams in efforts to prevent a "coalition with infamy" on the part of the "old line Whigs and all opponents of the bogus Oregon Democracy." He maintained vigorously that the quarrel among the Democrats was entirely a matter of their own, and that they should be left to fight it out in their own way.²

The proceedings of the Marion county Republican convention contain much that is suggestive of the situation in 1857-'58 from the Republican standpoint.³ The preamble to the resolutions referred to "a considerable number of professed Republicans who have been and are opposed to the organization of an Oregon Republican party and who have by their influence thus far prevented any general organization." It was declared to be worse than useless to wait or hope for any advantage to be gained by the schism among the Democrats, and a thorough organization was demanded. Early in March the Yamhill Republicans declared in favor of the nomination of a state ticket and recommended that the approaching convention nominate such candidates as *can* and *will* boldly go before the people in support of Republican principles.

The Republican state convention met at Salem April 2. In the platform adopted the first several resolutions dealt with the Kansas question and denounced the pro-slavery action of the Administration. The Dred Scott decision, "which makes the Constitution a grand title instrument to every holder of

¹Argus, March 6, 1858.

²Oregonian, Feb. 13, Feb. 20.

³Proceedings, in Oregonian, April 3.

slaves," was stigmatized as a disgrace to the judiciary of the Nation and a stain upon the national character. Locally, the Democratic doctrine of caucus sovereignty was repudiated as dangerous and anti-Republican. Likewise, the Viva Voce voting system, subjecting the suffrage of the citizen to the surveillance of partisan inspectors, was condemned as a relic of barbarism which found fit friends in a party whose whole organization was devoted to the extinguishment of every spark of personal freedom.¹ The ticket nominated was as follows: Congressman, J. R. McBride, Yamhill; Governor, John Denny, Marion; Secretary of State, Leander Holmes, Clackamas; Treasurer, E. L. Applegate, Umpqua; Printer, D. W. Craig, Clackamas, who was associated with Adams in the publication of the *Argus*.

In commenting upon the convention Dryer characterized "this Republican movement" as premature and unwise.² He charged a few men in and about Oregon City with having originated it, and with having called the convention "without the knowledge and consent of those who have a right to *advise at least* in matters of this kind. * * * Now, these men will have to elect *their* ticket, if elected at all." Personal pique at being ignored by the presumptive Republican leaders, combined with a feeling of jealousy over the ascendancy of the *Argus* with the new party, is clearly recognized in Dryer's attitude. Furthermore, his name had been unsuccessfully used in the convention in the nomination of Congressman. He declared the whole movement was conceived in error by those restless minds who lacked the all important element necessary to ensure political triumph over the Salem dynasty. With three tickets in the field, each bidding for Whig support as the heir of the Whig party, the Oregonian entered an eloquent protest. "Do not bury us until we are dead," said the irreconcilable Whig editor. "Let *us* say when we are dead." In an editorial—"To Oregonians who Love Their Country More than Party"—he sounded the last clarion call to Whigs to hold their ground.³

¹Proceedings in Oregonian, April 10.

²Oregonian, April 10.

³"Have the principles . . . of the Whig party ceased to exist? We think not. . . . What though the organization of the old Whig party be broken up—its principles still live. . . . Is John J. Crittenden, the gallant standard bearer, left alone? Have you all deserted him? . . . Have you denied the faith? Are you willing, do you wish to lose your political identity? Will you sell your birthright for a mess of pottage? Shame! Shame!"—Oregonian editorial, April 17, addressed to Whigs.

The political situation in the campaign of 1858 is confusing. For, while many issues were declared, the one real issue was—who should have the offices?¹ Should the Salem Clique continue to dominate Oregon politics? Hence, any attempt to explain the political alignments in the light of national issues then before the people leads to confusion. The regular Democratic ticket was referred to as the pro-slavery ticket by the enemies of the Clique. True, it was headed by Whiteaker, an avowed slavery man, and the “hards” strongly upheld Buchanan in his Kansas policy. However, in interpreting the Dred Scott decision, Bush and other leaders of the “hards” were more conservative than some of the opposition Democrats, represented by the Occidental Messenger, which held that even a state did not have the right to keep slavery out of its borders. In fact, the members of the Clique were understood to be free state men. Nevertheless, the “hards” applied indiscriminately the epithet “Black Republican” to the “soft” Democrats. Both free state and pro-slavery Democrats were found co-operating with the maligned “freedom shriekers” for the purpose of beating the Organization. Bush charged the Messenger or “Avery’s Ox,” with being as silent as death on the subject of slavery and Black Republicans during the campaign, for the reason that Avery was running for office and wanted Republican support. But he showed that after the election the latter again took up the cause of slavery and restored the prefix “Black” to his erstwhile friends, the Republicans.²

But Bush certainly had very little ground for charging anyone with inconsistency in this campaign. He was at heart, and had been openly, an enthusiastic supporter of Douglas and his policies. But with the break between Douglas and Buchanan, the Oregon Democracy espoused the latter and political patronage, as illustrated in the platform adopted. Bush, wishing to retain the lucrative job of public printer, quietly accepted the Buchanan, Lecompton platform and had no word

¹M. P. Deady, correspondence to San Francisco Bulletin, dated April 20, 1864.

²Statesman, June 29.

to say in defense of his friend Douglas during the campaign. It was in reference to this campaign that Delazon Smith, in speaking later of Bush, said he "packed the dumb dog over the state and barked for him because he couldn't bark for himself."¹ Bush had praised the state platform unstintedly, declaring that there was not a word too much or too little in it and that the confidence expressed in the wisdom and integrity of Buchanan was fully merited.²

Lane, alarmed at the prospect of Democratic discord in Oregon and at its probable relations to his political fortunes, made plain what he considered the paramount issue to be. In an open letter to the Statesman,³ he said: "Fellow Democrats of Oregon, division in the Democratic party will not do. * * * Shall Oregon come into the Union under the auspices of a sectional organization or shall she come in to strengthen the hands of the Constitution and the Union? * * * All Democrats should bear in mind that the Democratic party is the Union." He appealed to the Democracy to bury all private animosities and sacrifice ill feelings and heart burnings on the altar of the public good and to unite as one man in support of the regular nominees.

On May 21, preceding the June election, the Republican candidates for Congressman, Governor and Secretary of State publicly withdrew from the race, leaving the contest to be settled between the "hard" and "soft" factions of the Democrats. The majority of the counties had put out Republican tickets and adopted aggressive platforms. But Holmes, one of the retiring candidates, complained that too many Republicans counted their work done when the nominations were made. The candidates, in their withdrawal, said the organization for the campaign was incomplete and defective and not calculated to inspire success. Hence they thought better to retire than to make a poor showing of Republican strength,

¹"Delazon barked against Douglas, barked for Buchanan and barked for Lecompton and Dred Scott, giving an opportunity at the close of his speech for his 'candidate' to get down, wiggle his tail and whine an endorsement of what had been said, which he always did with relish."—Argus, Dec. 27, '62.

²Statesman, March 23.

³Quoted in Oregonian, May 1.

waiting to draw the issue at a more propitious time. The *Argus* deprecated their action but made the best of it, asserting that every Republican agreed that thereafter the Republican ticket must be adhered to in full every year until victory should be achieved.¹

The inevitable result was a more or less complete coalition between the Republicans and the National Democrats. The *Argus* of June 5 made the statement that in Clackamas and Yamhill counties the National Democratic candidates repudiated their own platform, accepting that of the Republicans. In a few counties, the Republican organization was kept intact and the three tickets were voted upon. As far as observable, in those counties where the "hards" lost, it was the "softs" which won. Washington county, which elected a Republican ticket, was an exception. Republican organization had for the time largely disintegrated in the face of the general desire to help overthrow Bush and the Salem Clique.

The election was a victory of organization over disorganization, the "hards" winning by very comfortable margins. But while Grover was elected Congressman by a majority of 1,669 and Whiteaker Governor by 1,138, Bush was victor over his nearest competitor, James O'Meara, by a bare 400 votes. The combined opposition secured the election of eleven members of the state legislature. The strongholds of the Opposition proved to be in Benton, Multnomah, Douglas and Yamhill counties.

Following the election, Adams made some very plain statements in a leader—"To the Republicans of Oregon."² Beginning with, "You now see that this election, like all that have preceded it, has been a perfect failure," he pointed out that the Republican party, instead of having consolidated itself by a thorough organization in every county, had lost ground. This, by listening to the counsels of "old pitchers in" who had long been "beating the Clique" whenever they saw a good opening to slip themselves into office between two factions.

¹*Argus*, May 22.

"We have seen enough of the rottenness and recklessness of demagogues in this campaign to satisfy us that the most deadly hostility to the Republican party may be looked for hereafter from adventurers, who, while they are terrible on the Clique, are determined that any opposition to it shall be so shaped as to secure their own personal preferment. * * * We trust the friends of sound principles will hereafter listen to no proposals for a 'Clique-beating party' upon a rotten platform. If we are beaten, let us be honorably beaten." A good share of this was evidently intended for Dryer who had opposed Republican organization and who had secured election to the legislature. Early in the campaign the Oregonian had attacked Adams viciously as a self-confessed dictator who had put out the Republican state ticket on his own responsibility.¹

The Constitution which had been adopted provided that the newly-elected state legislature should convene on the first Monday in July, and proceed to elect two United States Senators and make such further provision as should be necessary to the complete organization of the state government.² Accordingly, the legislature met July 5 and elected Lane and Delazon Smith as Oregon's first senators. Lane received 46 votes, every "National" Democratic member joining their enemies, the "hards," in supporting him. Smith received 39 votes, the strength of the Organization in the assembly. Five of the seven "soft" members joined the three Republican members in voting for David Logan, against Smith.³ A few acts were passed which were not to become operative until Congress should admit Oregon into the Union.

Shortly before this special session of the legislative assembly, the United States Senate had passed the bill for the admission of the state of Oregon. Lane, in writing from Washington to Bush in the interest of his candidacy for the senate, announced the Senate's action and indicated clearly that there was no question at all of the passage of the bill in the house. But Congress adjourned without conferring statehood upon

¹Oregonian, April 24.

²Article 18, section 6, Constitution of Oregon.

³Proceedings, in Argus, July 17.

Oregon. The fact soon became known that Lane had done practically nothing toward securing favorable action in the house. No satisfactory explanation of his strange attitude could be had. Oregon Democracy was surprised, disappointed and chagrined. Popular adulation of the idolized leader, who had just been honored by Democracy's unanimous vote for United States Senator, began to give way to doubt and suspicion. His attitude was attributed to ulterior motives.

It has been pointed out that the relations between Lane and the Clique had never been cordial.¹ Especially was this true between Lane and Bush, as the private correspondence between the various leaders clearly shows.² But a public break between them did not take place until in December, 1858. In a long editorial, "Why the State was not Admitted," Bush attacked Lane for his inaction, intimating that Lane, fearing he might not be elected Senator, was not anxious to have the Territorial government superseded, under which he had an unexpired term to fill out as delegate. He declared that there was no room for doubt that Oregon's delegate had proven unfaithful and false to his trust.³ From this time on the Statesman bitterly attacked Lane.⁴ And as Delazon Smith, who, with Congressman-elect Grover, had gone on to Washington, took sides with his colleague, he came in with Lane for a full share of abuse. Contributed articles in the Statesman indicate that the feeling against Lane was general and that the Democrats were losing faith in his devotion to the interests of Oregon as above his own personal interests.

The difficulties of the Oregon Democracy in 1858 in finding and maintaining a status, in harmony with conditions at Washington, demand more than the passing notice already given. The Democratic policy was to evade expression on any issue

¹Supra, pages 81, 82, 142.

²"Lane didn't get anything allowed me for that 2nd volume of statutes—says Black Republicans prevented him. Likely, I reckon he thinks it best to keep that suspended over my head to 'hold the wretch in order.' Well, let it hang. 'Who's afeard'?"—Letter, Bush to Deady, Oct. 11, 1856.

³Statesman, Dec. 21.

⁴The Democratic Crisis, Feb. 9, 1859 attributed Bush's sudden attack on Lane to the fact that the latter did not secure the passage of a bill introduced in Congress for the relief of Bush to the extent of \$6000 for printing the statutes of Oregon.

which might threaten the unity and harmony of the party organization. It has been seen how such unity was endangered by the rise of the slavery question in Oregon and by the Dred Scott decision. Further trouble was encountered in the attempt to maintain harmony in the face of the disagreement between President Buchanan and Douglas over the Lecompton constitution in Kansas. The reflection of this controversy is first found in Oregon in January, 1858.¹ In February Bush expressed his opinion privately in favor of Douglas' position.² Publicly, he approached the question very gingerly and in the *Statesman* did his best to belittle and smooth away the apparent discord between the two national Democratic leaders. "There is no difference between the President and Mr. Douglas in matter of any vital principle involved," he declared.³ After epitomizing Buchanan's contentions, he said, "Mr. Douglas denies all these conclusions and raises issues of fact tending to vitiate their basis." This was as near as Bush came in 1858 to supporting Douglas with whom he was in sympathy. Having summed up the situation diplomatically, he added the words of paternal admonition, "We cannot encourage our (Oregon) Democracy to turn much attention to this subject until it shall assume more tangible shape or involve some more important principle."

The Linn county Democrats, whose declarations in conventions were generally those of the Democratic orator and leader, Delazon Smith, asserted that the Kansas difficulty could never rise to the dignity of a national issue; that they regarded the difference of opinion between President Buchanan and Senator Douglas as "both honest and courteous"; that "members of the Democratic party may everywhere differ in opinion to

¹"Jo Lane's Times which had just committed itself and the Oregon Democracy to the Douglas and Walker horn of the Kansas swindle, has changed its coat since Jo Lane has sent in his instructions, and came out last Saturday with a flaming endorsement of Buchanan's plan of subjugating Kansas, although it still contends that the Constitution should have been submitted to the people of Kansas."—*Argus*, Jan. 30.

²"As to the position of Buchanan and Douglas they are both right in one sense. I think Douglas' position is undeniably correct. . . . But the conduct of the free state men in Kansas, in refusing to vote for delegates to the Constitutional Convention, leaves them without much right to complain and I am not not certain but that I would vote for the Lecompton Constitution if I was in Congress."—Letter, Bush to Deady, Feb. 12, 1858.

³*Statesman*, March 2.

the same extent and upon the same subject, without impairing their standing as Democrats."¹ But by the time the state convention assembled, the prestige of the Administration made itself felt, with the result of the aforementioned endorsement of Buchanan and his policies. As the campaign progressed the support of President Buchanan became more and more cordial and pronounced. Douglas was completely deserted. The Lane county Democrats, not content with a general hearty endorsement of the administration of "our present patriotic and distinguished Chief Magistrate," singled out for special commendation, "that policy pertaining to the admission of Kansas."

But before the end of the year Oregon Democracy began to experience a change of heart. Dryer wrote from Sâlem in December, when the last Territorial legislature was in session, that those who had been loudest in denouncing Douglas and lauding Buchanan were now pronouncing eulogies upon the former and "cursing both loud and deep Old Buck as a humbug and knave." He attributed the sudden conversion solely and entirely to the Illinois election, which had "produced a change almost equal to that of Pentecost." Dryer proceeded with a picturesque characterization of the Oregon Democracy² and also predicted the open break between Bush and Lane which occurred that very month.

Though a state constitution had been adopted, state officers elected, a state legislature held, United States Senators chosen and the new Governor inaugurated, Oregon remained a Territory. Lane advised the people of Oregon to proceed under the auspices of the state government just as though Congress had admitted the Territory as a state. He recommended the holding of the regular session of the state legislature in September in accordance with the schedule of the Constitution. Such semi-defiant procedure was vigorously opposed by the Statesman. The assembly-elect followed the lead of Bush

¹Proceedings, in Statesman, March 16.

²"Democracy in Oregon means devotion to the personal interests of Asahel Bush. . . . It means that you must relish the egotism as well as the Toryism of D—y [Deadly] and commend the recreancy of B—E [Boise] the Massachusetts Whig and laugh immoderately at the obscenity of "Nes" [Nesmith] and down on your belly at their bidding where you must crawl, meekly looking up and eating any quantity of dirt that is set before you."—Oregonian, Dec. 18.

and the September session was not held, though an abortive attempt was made to organize the session, on the part of the Opposition members.

Hence, the Territorial legislature which had been elected in June as a precautionary measure, at the same time that the state assembly was elected, was called to meet in December. The same question relative to the protection of slave property, that had embroiled the session of the preceding year, was now again introduced. A comparison of the discussions of the two sessions is interesting as showing the advanced ground which had been taken by certain Democrats in the interim relative to the rights of slavery in the Territories.

The "petitions of several citizens of Oregon praying for the passage of a law for the protection of slave property in Oregon"¹ were referred to the judiciary committee of the house. The majority report, signed by W. W. Chapman, chairman, and W. G. T'Vault, held that the Constitution guaranteed equal rights to all property holders in the Territories, including slave owners. And further, that "when Congress does organize a Territorial government that the Constitution guarantees to the inhabitants the right to legislate, and regulate the manner how any person shall have his property protected."² Hence the committee introduced a bill containing the following provisions: First, that those who had brought slaves into the Territory, should have all the rights and remedies in the several courts of the Territory, which were allowed for the protection and recovery of any other personal property of like value. Second, that those knowingly harboring or employing a slave without consent of the owner should be subject to a forfeit of five dollars per day to the owner. Third, that slaves should be rated and assessed to owners like any other property. Fourth, that any master or owner of a boat carrying a slave out of the Territory or to any point in the Territory without the consent of the owner, should forfeit the value of the same to the latter.

¹Proceedings, *Oregonian*, Jan. 22, 1859.

²*Ibid.*, Jan. 15.

Two minority reports were returned from the committee. One was by N. H. Cranor of Marion, who had taken an important part in the discussion on the same question a year previous, at which time he had held that slavery was excluded from Oregon by the act of Congress organizing the Territory.¹ Now, he held that as the Territories were property of the General Government, the citizens of all sections had equal rights therein; that neither Congress nor the Territories, under the Dred Scott decision, had power to legislate upon the question of slavery in the Territories. Hence, the legislation petitioned for was impossible and was also useless, as by the decision of the Supreme Court, slavery was already protected in the Territories and needed no special legislation. One year before, Cranor had taken just the opposite position. He presents a good example of the rapid intellectual development of good Democrats whose chief object was to adjust their ideas to the constitutional doctrine of the Administration.

The other minority report was presented by E. D. Shattuck, a Republican, representing Washington and Multnomah. He reviewed at length the Republican doctrine on the question, declaring that that part of the Scott decision affecting the question at issue was gratuitous and had not the force of law; that under its organic act, the Territorial legislature had power to legislate upon the subject in the negative only. In short, Cranor held that a Territorial legislature could take no action; Chapman and T'Vault that it could take action, but only affirmatively; Shattuck that it could take action, but only negatively.

Action was not taken upon the majority report until near midnight of the last day of the session, when, with a small attendance present, it was adopted by a vote of 13 to 9. This was the action of the house only, and of course the negro bill introduced was abortive. However, it is an interesting fact that such a bill was actually introduced and rather heartily supported. And that too, after the people of Oregon, in accordance with the Democratic doctrine of popular sovereignty, had decided against slavery by a vote approximate five to one.

¹Supra, page 161.

PART III
THE PERIOD OF STATE GOVERNMENT—
CIVIL WAR PERIOD

CHAPTER IX
Political Maneuvering in 1859

CHAPTER XI

POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN 1859

The statement has been made that no state, not of the original thirteen, has contributed so materially as Oregon in the circumstances of its acquisition and territorial organization to the great national issues which have divided the country.¹ Whether the statement is literally true or not, it forcefully suggests what is apt generally to be overlooked—the close, vital relation of isolated Oregon to the great issues which have stirred the whole nation. It is not the purpose here to dwell upon this interesting phase, further than to suggest the relation of the admission of Oregon—as a Territory in 1848 and as a state in 1859—to the development of the national issue of slavery.

In 1848 the organization of the Territory had been opposed by the pro-slavery element in Congress. In the struggle over the Oregon bill, occasioned by the anti-slavery provision, Calhoun laid down the principles which were thereafter to be maintained by the South and on which the policy of the National Democracy was to be based. He declared that the territories were the common property of the people of the United States and that as a result the South was entitled to the same property rights therein as the North. Ten years later Oregon was knocking for admission to the Union as a free state. This time the opposition arose from the anti-slavery element in Congress, the Oregon bill being championed by the regular Democratic organization. In the first place it was not considered strictly a party question. In 1857 the lower house of Congress had passed an act authorizing the people of Oregon to organize a state government, but Congress adjourned before action was taken by the Senate. In May, 1858, the Senate passed a bill by a vote of 35 to 17 to admit Oregon, with the constitution which had in the meantime been adopted. Eleven Republican senators were among the 35 and six among the 17.

¹Hon. Frederick N. Judson, St. Louis, Mo., in anniversary address commemorating admission of Oregon to the Union. See Proceedings, p. 33.

Among the minority were some of the radical Southern senators including Jefferson Davis, who were opposed to the admission of any more northern states. The leader of the eleven Republicans who favored admission was Wm. H. Seward.¹ As has been suggested, the first session of this the 35th Congress came to a close without action having been taken by the lower house.²

The action of the rabid, pro-slavery Southern senators in opposing the admission bill, made it plain that the Administration Democrats could not command the full party vote in support of the bill. The Republicans, whose numbers had been steadily increasing in Congress and who were anxious to make their influence felt, now found in the Oregon question the eagerly awaited opportunity to exhibit their party strength. Various reasons for their opposition to the admission bill were publicly stated by the Republicans. Oregon's population was not sufficient to entitle her to statehood. The same requirements should be made of Oregon which had been prescribed for Kansas. Some criticism of the constitution was indulged in. But these were not the real sources of opposition. Oregon gave promise of being a Democratic state—had in fact already elected Democratic senators and congressman—and her admission would materially increase the strength of that party in Congress. It was, moreover, already conceded that the approaching presidential election would be closely contested and Oregon might turn the scale the wrong way—from the Republican viewpoint. The sincerity of the people of Oregon in adopting a free-state constitution under which discrimination was made against free Negroes, and furthermore in electing a recognized pro-slavery advocate in Lane to the Senate, was questioned. The strength of the pro-slavery element in Oregon was known and feared. Furthermore, there was a desire on the part of the Republicans to retaliate upon the

¹Franklin P. Rice, "Eli Thayer and the Admission of Oregon" in the Worcester (Mass.) Magazine for February and March, 1906, republished in "Proceedings of the 50th Anniversary of the Admission of the State of Oregon to the Union." Mr. Rice gives a concise, lucid account of the situation, based upon the records of Congress and the newspapers of the period, and his account has here been closely followed.

²Supra, page

Democrats for their refusal to admit Kansas. Influenced by these various motives, the Republican organization in Congress, encouraged by such prominent Republicans as Horace Greeley, determined to test its strength against the Administration forces by opposing the Oregon bill.

Accordingly, when, in January, of the second session of this Congress, the bill for the admission of Oregon was reported in the house, the Republican policy of opposition was declared. But when the party managers undertook to rally the full Republican strength against the bill,—they encountered serious defection in the ranks. Fifteen Republicans, led by Eli Thayer of Massachusetts, refused to regard the Oregon bill as a party measure, which it had really now become. The most strenuous efforts were made to enforce party discipline upon them but in vain. Viewing the question upon its own merits, they declared that the people of Oregon had proceeded in accordance with the accustomed usages, had acted in good faith and were entitled to statehood. Hence they voted for the bill, with the Administration forces, as opposed to the Republican organization and the Southern extremists. On February 12, 1859, the house passed the bill by a vote of 114 to 108 and two days later the President affixed his signature. Oregon was at last a state and the eager hopes of a decade were realized.

The passage of the admission bill seemed to reinstate Lane partially with Oregon Democrats, though not with Bush and the Clique with whom the break was irrevocable. The general attitude toward Lane is reflected in the actions of the county Democratic conventions held in the spring of 1859. The Polk county Democrats declared that they would not aid in building up a personal party for any man, no matter what his present position and future prospects might be. They demanded a strict adherence to the doctrine of rotation in office.¹ On the other hand, the Clackamas Democrats viewed "with pride and renewed confidence the continuous and untiring zeal of our fellow-citizen, the Hon. Jos. Lane, in his efforts to secure the highest good of Oregon and we believe that but for his per-

¹Statesman, April 12, 1859.

sonal efforts in our behalf, Oregon would now be in Territorial vassalage." In harmony with this resolution, the Statesman was condemned for its assaults upon distinguished members of the Democratic party.¹ Similar action supporting Lane was taken by Josephine, Multnomah and Linn county, though in some cases by a bare majority vote.²

The break between Lane and the Clique gave the Nationals or "soft" faction of the party their opportunity. As has been shown, they remained steadfast in their loyalty to Lane and they now began to rally round him as their champion against the Clique. The leadership of Lane gave them that political legitimacy which was so essential. They were no longer political pariahs. In fact they began looking forward at once to securing, through the prestige of Lane, the control of the regular party machinery. The return of the Nationals to the regular organization was hailed with satisfaction by several county conventions and by the following resolution adopted by the state convention: "We approve and rejoice over that thorough and harmonious unison of the party which has displaced past differences and given assurances of future united action." As the Nationals were in control of the convention, however, the "approval" was easily understood and there was a lurking suspicion of irony in the reference to the harmonious unison of the party.

The Democratic state convention met on April 20 at Salem. It was the first convention in which the Lane forces and the Clique had been in open opposition. A trial of strength was at once made and the Clique was worsted for the first time. A minority of the committee on resolutions dissented from the report. Thirty votes were cast against the fifth resolution which strongly commended the three Oregon representatives in Congress for their effective work in securing the admission of Oregon.³ The real test of strength, however, came in the vote for nomination of a Congressman to succeed Grover. Lansing

¹Ibid., April 19.

²Ibid., April 19, April 26.

³Proceedings, Statesman, April 26.

Stout, a young Portland attorney who had recently come from California, was nominated by the Lane-Smith faction. Grover, a member of the Clique, was supported by the old organization for renomination. Stout was nominated by a vote of 40 to 33. As to the methods by which this result was achieved, charges and recriminations were many and bitter. Bush charged that Linn county promised to vote for Grover if Marion county would pledge itself to vote for the re-election of Delazon Smith as United States Senator. This was refused, whereupon the opposition to the Clique joined forces in a secret caucus where successful plans for the defeat of Grover were matured. Bush declared that the latter was sacrificed because he had chosen to devote his time and influence at Washington to the interests of his constituents and country rather than to the perpetuation of Gen. Lane in office.¹

The attitude of the old organization leaders on seeing their factional enemies step in and at once secure control of the party organization may be easily imagined. Bush was furious and made it plain in the Statesman that little help might be expected from him in the campaign. Other members of the Clique were equally irreconcilable.² On the other hand, the Nationals were correspondingly jubilant. The expression of the Oregon Weekly Union of Corvallis, edited by Jas. H. Slater, a National, may be regarded as typical of the attitude of the "softs". In reviewing the proceedings of the convention,³ Slater announced that in the repudiation of the old fifth and sixth resolutions, the principles contended for by the National Democrats were thus triumphant even in the old organization. Believing that a return to correct principles had been effected; that caucus sovereignty had been abandoned and repudiated; that censorship of the Democratic press was not to be continued; that effect was to be given to the voice of the

¹Editorials in Statesman, April 26, on "Democratic State Convention" and "The Personal Party."

²"You have doubtless heard of the damnable outrage perpetrated by Lane and Smith's friends in our mis-called Democratic Convention." (Details given.) "This is a remarkable triumph of caucus sovereignty! I boldly denounced the 'dirty bargain' in the Convention—laid the thing open to public gaze—exposed Stout's Know Nothingism in California."—Nesmith to Deady, April 25.

³Oregon Weekly Union, April 23.

masses in preference to the dicta of a few who had usurped authority, Slater pledged his best efforts to the support of the ticket.

Early in the spring the Republicans began organizing with a new determination to establish a permanent and independent party, free from all connection with Democratic factions. As an illustration of what was taking place over the state, a city mass meeting was held at Portland, March 5, "for the purpose of organizing a party which shall be opposed to the present (so-called) Democratic party of Oregon." The resolutions adopted called for the thorough organization of the National Republican party in Oregon; utterly repudiated the doctrines of abolitionism and denied that it constituted any part of the Republican creed; declared unreservedly for the full and free application to the Territories of the doctrine of popular sovereignty.¹ This last resolution indicates the heresy of Oregon Republicanism on the great issue of squatter sovereignty, further evidence of which was to be frequently given.

Among those addressing the meeting was Dryer. In the next issue of the *Oregonian* he strongly endorsed the meeting and from this time may be considered a Republican. In the spring of 1858 he had denounced the idea of political organization of the opposition as likely to prove as baneful as that of the Salem Clique. But in December he had turned squarely about and urged the necessity of the organization of a political party by the *People of Oregon* as the only remedy for the existing evils under Clique rule.² In February, 1859, he referred to the call—made by "W. T. Matlock and four other residents of Clackamas county calling themselves a 'Republican Central Committee'"—for a state convention to be held at Salem, April 21. He could not withhold some insinuations as to the presumption of a few Clackamas county politicians, self-constituted as leaders, but concluded with expressing the hope that the convention would prove successful in organizing the forces against the ruling dynasty.³ All of which indicated that Dryer was "coming

¹*Oregonian*, March 12.

²*Oregonian*, Dec. 4, 1858.

³*Ibid.*, Feb. 5, 1859.

round" gradually. A little later in a leader, "The Republicans!" he speaks of the aggressive work of the Republicans in the several counties, which he gives guarded commendation, and tacitly joins his fortunes with the new party.¹ Thus, after holding aloof for three years, the old Whig veteran now brought the Oregonian to the aid of the Republican cause.

The Republican state convention met at Salem on the day following the meeting of the Democrats. The Republicans proceeded with a seriousness of purpose, with a practical determination to achieve results as well as to declare high sounding principles, which had not before characterized them. They now acted as members of a political organization rather than as a mere assembly of reform enthusiasts and political doctrinaires. The resolutions adopted, written by such men as J. R. McBride, T. W. Davenport and Jesse Applegate, were sane, conservative and even conciliating.² The strongest devotion to the Union was avowed and anything approaching hatred of any part of it was as strongly disavowed. While announcing unalterable opposition to slavery extension, the right to interfere with institutions existing in the states, was disclaimed. A guarded declaration was made in favor of popular sovereignty, which, though not in accordance with orthodox Republicanism, would tend to mollify aggressive Westerners and would clearly strengthen the party in Oregon. Intervention of Congress for the protection of slavery in the Territories, demanded by leading Democrats, was severely denounced. While declaring for the purity of the ballot box, a welcome was extended to those foreigners who preferred free institutions to despotism. The belief was expressed that the enforcement of the existing naturalization laws was all that was necessary as a barrier against foreign immigration. This set the Republicans clear on the subject of Know Nothingism. The annexation of adjacent territory was favored, by fair and honorable means, with the consent of the governed. The resolutions further declared for a homestead bill, the construction

¹Ibid., Feb. 26.

²Proceedings in *Statesman*, April 26 and in *Argus*, April 30.

of the Pacific railroad, internal improvements and for a tariff upon imports to meet the current expenses of the government, which should discriminate in favor of home industry. The immediate payment of the Oregon Indian war debt was urged upon Congress.

David Logan was nominated for Congress with 32 votes, his nearest competitor being B. J. Pengra of Eugene, editor of a new Republican paper, the People's Press. Dr. W. Warren, Leander Holmes and A. G. Hovey were chosen as delegates to the National Republican convention of 1860, and were instructed to use their influence for W. H. Seward.¹ H. W. Corbett, W. C. Johnson and E. D. Shattuck were elected as a state central committee.

Bush, enraged and disgusted over the results of the Democratic Convention, gave the Republicans unwonted consideration. He stated that Logan was well known throughout the state and was the strongest man that could have been named; that there were some good things in the platform and some "colored" things; but that it was unexpectedly decent to come from such a body as the convention was.² In fact, after a week for reflection, Bush began to find fault with the Republican platform because it *was* so mild and inoffensive. He pointed out at once the singular incongruity between the platform and candidate for Congress on the one hand, and the Seward instructions on the other. He said that the platform had no Seward Republicanism in it and that Logan's slavery opinions no more accorded with Seward's than with Garrison's. The opinion was expressed that the platform was three-fourths humbug; that neither it nor the candidate even approached the eastern standard of black Republicanism. Nor did they

¹The Seward instructions were slipped through rather surreptitiously near the close of the Convention by Pengra, after many delegates had left. See Argus, Oct. 29, 1859.

²Statesman, April 26.

"Logan was nominated by the blacks and Jesse made the best platform that could be constructed out of the materials. I believe he will be elected. The Shannons, English, Cornoyer and all the French are up in arms for Logan." (Referring to the fact that Stout had been a Know Nothing.) "Jo and Ahio Watt are electioneering for Logan in Yamhill so you may know h—— is broke loose."—Nesmith to Deady, April 25.

even represent the anti-slavery opinions of the majority of the convention from which they were sent forth.¹

The Argus, in commenting upon the convention and its results, declared that for the first time in the history of Oregon the issue was now fairly made between the Republicans as the friends of free laborers and the Jo Lane Democracy as the advocates of negro-breeding, negro-extension fanaticism. The first time, because "the blacks", under the management of Lane, had run up their true colors. The 2600 fanatics who had voted for slavery in Oregon had now succeeded in crushing out the free soil element from the Democratic party by throwing Grover, Williams and other free state men overboard;² by striking out from their creed "everything that savored of a license for Democrats to favor freedom and take an occasional squint at the North Star." This was the issue which Adams had been impatiently trying to force ever since the establishment of the Argus. "Parson" Adams was no "waiter on Providence." Believing the world to be full of time-crusted error and that he had a special mission to set it to rights, he preferred to lead the forlorn hope and let the slow and conservative masses come limping after him in their own good time, never doubting but that they would come sooner or later.³ He now entered upon the campaign with aggressiveness and enthusiasm.

The great question of the power of the federal government over slavery in the Territories occupied so important a place in the campaign of 1859 that it is necessary to dwell upon the state of opinion in Oregon upon the national issue. When the doctrine of squatter sovereignty was given official and legal sanction in the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854, the free state men in Oregon were quick to repudiate it. But

¹Statesman, May 3.

²"We heard one of the most prominent and most active of Lane's supporters from Southern Oregon denounce Williams for writing his free-state letter, and the Salem organ for publishing such 'rotten abolitionism'. The publication of that letter did the work for Williams and the endorsement of it has done the work for many more, and these headless Democrats are now as effectually killed off in the party as though they had joined the Rpublicans."—Argus, April 30.

³Characterization by M. P. Deady in correspondence to the San Francisco Bulletin, dated May 20, 1863.

the spirit of the West—of the self-governing frontiersmen, was too strong. Years before the doctrine of popular sovereignty was enunciated, the Oregon pioneers had established the first American government upon the Pacific Coast solely upon the principles of absolute popular sovereignty. It was the cardinal doctrine in their political creed—in fact it *was* their common creed, before the new country became involved in national politics. When the Democratic party espoused it as a political issue, the Oregon Democrats pushed their favorite doctrine to the extreme, as will be shown. The opposition were thus placed on the defensive, and at first were prompted by the binding force of party loyalty to oppose it, but only in its relation to the slavery question. In all other particulars they were in favor of the people of the Territories managing their own affairs without interference from Washington. The distinction was hard to maintain. Hence, when the pro-slavery Democrats abandoned the ground of squatter sovereignty for that of direct intervention in behalf of slavery, it gave the Oregon Republicans, especially the more conservative ones, the opportunity to espouse the doctrine, in its entirety. There was thus very little difference between them and the Douglas Democrats. It is interesting to note that at a time when allegiance to party doctrines was almost a matter of religion, that inherent desire of the Western pioneers to govern themselves was strong enough to override party barriers on the one question of popular sovereignty. On the other hand, the fact that many Western Democrats saw fit to forsake the popular doctrine suggests how infatuated was their devotion to the cause of the slave power.

The typical Western attitude on the question was expressed by Bush in 1857 in an editorial on squatter sovereignty,¹ in which he declared that the principle should be extended to give people in the Territories power over all legislation to the same extent as enjoyed by citizens of the states. "We are just as capable here in Oregon to elect our officers, make our laws unrestricted and in all things govern ourselves, as we were, scattered over the thirty-one states. And we are presuming

¹Statesman, March 17, 1857.

enough to claim that we of right ought to have the same powers here that we exercised there." In 1858 when the Oregon Democrats supported Buchanan and his Lecompton policy in Kansas, their attitude toward the Douglas doctrine was passive, at best. This made it easy for Dryer to declare his sentiments upon the subject. He stated that he was and always had been in favor of the Kansas-Nebraska doctrine of popular sovereignty and had opposed the Kansas-Nebraska bill merely because it disturbed a long-established and accepted settlement of a difficult problem. He went so far as to declare that he would cheerfully support either Douglas or Crittenden for the presidency upon that issue.¹ Now in 1859, with Lane and the radical, slavery-extension Democrats in control of the party organization, Bush renewed his allegiance to Douglas and his doctrines with increased zeal, as if to atone for his apostasy of the previous year. In developing to its last conclusion his favorite doctrine, he declared that the only power which Congress possessed over the Territories by virtue of the Constitution was based upon the "power to dispose of and make all useful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States"; that it conferred no power to legislate for the people of the Territories, to appoint officers over them nor to govern them in any way whatsoever; Congress therefore had no warrant whatever for the existing system of territorial government, yet the people had long submitted in silence to many of the same grievances for which their forefathers threw off the British yoke. "Officers have been imposed upon us without our consent and in direct violation of our will. Our judges have been made dependent upon the will of the President and Senate alone for the tenure of their offices and for the amount and payment of their salaries. The administration of justice has been obstructed by the passage of unjust and unwholesome laws. We have been repeatedly annoyed by the insolence of officials not of our own choosing. And all this without even the semblance of constitutional authority!"² What a familiar ring this has to those who have fol-

¹Oregonian, May 8, 1858.

²Statesman, March 1, 1859.

lowed at all the proceedings of the old colonial assemblies in pre-revolutionary days! It indicates clearly what the doctrine of popular sovereignty meant to Oregonians.

The State Democratic platform of 1859 stated that the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case was acknowledged by the Democratic party as a correct interpretation of the Constitution on the question of slavery. This was a palpable evasion as there were no less than three distinct interpretations of that decision among the Democrats. The Douglas phase of the doctrine, that of absolute non-intervention, was still very generally held by the rank and file of the Oregon democracy. Many, however, were now following the lead of Lane, who maintained that slavery existed in the Territories by virtue of the Constitution and that the people of the Territories had no authority either to establish it or prohibit its introduction. Bush hence charged him with having deserted the Democratic principle of popular sovereignty and with having taken up "the quibble devised by some place-seeking demagogues, to cheat unthinking Southern extensionists."¹ Lane had merely advanced to the Buchanan or Administration interpretation, but Bush refused to recognize the latter as Democratic doctrine. The radical Democratic position was voiced by Editor O'Meara in the Standard, who declared for positive intervention by Congress for the protection of slavery in the Territories. He charged that whoever held a different doctrine was a Black Republican. He attacked Douglas for his Freeport speech doctrine, as either a demagogue or "a very thick-headed numbskull," charging him with utterances treasonable and subversive of the Constitution.²

In the campaign, Lansing Stout, the Democratic candidate for Congressman, supported the Administration doctrine and even approached that of the interventionists, maintaining that the people were obliged to enact laws for the protection of slaves in the Territories. He was supported on the stump by Smith and Lane, who spent most of their time in denouncing

¹Statesman, editorial, "Then and Now", Nov. 22, 1859.

²Quoted in Argus, May 28.

the Statesman and defending themselves. Bush carried Stout's name at the head of the ticket in the Statesman. He did nothing for his election, however, merely damning him with faint praise—very faint, indeed. Almost the entire editorial space of the Statesman was devoted to the detraction and defamation of Smith and Lane, vituperative and scurrilous to the last degree; especially when directed against Delazon Smith, or "Delusion" Smith, as he was universally referred to by his political enemies. This tendency of Oregon journalism towards the Billingsgate, which had always been pronounced and which became known as the "Oregon Style," reached its height, or rather, depth, during this period.

David Logan was a very conservative Republican, to say the least. He could almost as truly be termed a Douglas Democrat. But he was the logical candidate to run upon the Republican platform adopted in April. It had declared for popular sovereignty, "in deference to the prevailing public sentiment" as Bush said,¹ and Logan, in harmony with a few independent Republicans like Eli Thayer, was a hearty supporter of the doctrine, which he now freely proclaimed. In this he was strongly supported by the Oregonian which declared that the Republican party of Oregon stood firmly pledged to non-intervention.² It is not to be presumed that this position upon the question was pleasing to all the Republicans of the state, by any means. A very different class of men rallied round the Republican standard in 1858 and 1859, from those who had set up that standard in the Territory, and who for their devotion to the cause of human freedom had been known by the inelegant but expressive term—"dam-Black Republican." The growing success of the party in the East, *and* the admission of Oregon to statehood, which would bring Oregon Republicans in direct connection with the National organization, was exerting a decisive influence. Many, who had taken no active interest in the great moral issues at stake, seeing an opportunity to aid in the defeat of the Democratic party and to advance their own fortunes,

¹Statesman, Aug. 2.

²Oregonian, Aug. 6.

political and otherwise, now "rallied to the party conventions and were active participants therein, as though they were native to the manor born."¹ With these, party success was more important than unwavering allegiance to some abstract principle. It must not be inferred, however, that the later accessions to the party were actuated solely by personal and mercenary motives. Many of those who had been associated with the beginnings of Republicanism in Oregon might almost be termed professional reformers. They had aided in the temperance movement, had been identified with Knownothingism, abolitionism and had advocated various doctrines regarded by the public at large as visionary and fanatical. This explains to some degree the extent to which the early Republicans had been maligned. Their very zeal caused them to be mistrusted. It was the anxious purpose of the Republicans in 1859 to free themselves from all stigma of fanaticism, and to inspire confidence in themselves as statesmen rather than to incur suspicion as doctrinaires. This did not mean necessarily a desertion of Republican principles. It did imply a re-statement of them and some readjustment, as on the question of popular sovereignty. It is from this general situation that the conservative, semi-orthodox attitude of the Oregon Republicans in 1859, must be viewed. Dryer, who was a good example of the second edition Republicans, gave apt expression to their viewpoint in the following: "There are a large number of people possessed of a kind of night-mare upon this question of slavery. This class is composed both of the ultraists for and the ultraists against slavery. Each branch of this class seems to have set up a Congo Negro as a fit subject or idol of their worship. We are none of this class and we speak for the Republican party of Oregon by authority, when we say that they do not compose either branch of this class."²

The election resulted in almost a political revolution. The issue was long in doubt and when finally determined it was found that Stout had been elected by a bare majority of 16

¹Davenport, in *Oregon Historical Quarterly* for December, 1908, p. 334.

²*Oregonian*, Aug. 6.

votes. With the Democrats in charge of the machinery of election, this was indeed a narrow margin. The result was astounding to both parties. Marion county, the seat of the government and of the Salem Clique, which normally might have been expected to give Stout a majority of some 500 votes, gave Logan 782 majority. Bush declared that he voted for Stout, but admitted that he did not give him the earnest, active support that he would have done had he been regularly and fairly nominated. He attributed the decreased Democratic vote to lukewarmness on the part of many old Democrats, due to Stout's former active connection with the Know Nothing party in California. Particularly was that the case in Marion county in which there was a large foreign vote. On the other hand, Logan's espousal of popular sovereignty made it easy for many Douglas Democrats to support him. It was only by the Democratic steadfastness of the isolated southern counties that the great defection was overcome and Stout's election secured.

Out of the sacrifice of Grover at the Democratic convention in April by the Lane faction, there grew a political vendetta among the Democrats. As a result there was no election of United States senator at the special session of the legislature called in May to complete the details of state organization. Smith had drawn the short term which had expired on the adjournment of Congress, within a month after he and Lane had been sworn in. He had been in Washington during the winter, however, and had thoroughly identified himself with Lane in the growing strife between the latter and the Clique. He apparently entered upon a life of dissipation in Washington, lurid stories of which found their way back to Oregon to be given full publicity by Smith's enemies, particularly by Bush in the Statesman. Smith made a desperate effort for re-election at the May special session, with the apparent support of Lane, whose good faith toward his colleague and ally was questioned. Though Smith was himself discredited and unable to secure re-election, the factions in the legislature seemed evenly enough divided so that the Lane-Smith forces could probably have prevented the election of a member of the oppos-

ing faction. At any rate, the Democrats were not disposed to force the issue at this time by opening up the struggle and chose to allow the seat in the Senate to remain vacant until the regular session of the next legislature in 1860.

At the State Democratic Convention in April, when the Lane faction by its secret caucus captured the organization, it secured control of the state central committee. The committee met at Eugene, September 24, and issued a call for a state convention to be held at Eugene, November 16, to elect delegates to the National Democratic Convention to be held at Charleston the coming year. A split occurred in the committee over the choice of a basis of representation on which delegates to the Convention should be chosen. The Lane forces were in the majority and voted that the representation be based upon the Democratic vote for Stout in the late election. This was in accordance with past procedure. It would now prove favorable to Lane as it would very materially diminish the number of delegates from the Willamette Valley counties, where opposition to him was pronounced, and increase the number from the southern counties which remained loyal to him. The Bush or Salem faction maintained that this basis disfranchised two thousand Democrats who had constantly battled for Democratic principles "both before and since the late Democratic candidate proved recreant to those principles by a desertion to the secret conclave of an oath-bound enemy." Accordingly the minority, demanding representation upon the basis of the vote cast for Whiteaker for governor in 1858, withdrew and issued a separate call to the Democracy of Oregon in which they asked the counties to send delegates to the Eugene convention on this basis. In this action they were upheld and supported by the Statesman.

The reasons for Lane's special anxiety to secure control of the Eugene convention lay in his ambition to be named on the national ticket to be nominated at Charleston. As early as 1852 he was an active candidate for the nomination of president of the United States and received no little encouragement.¹ From that time on he had been at least a willing, re-

¹In the collection of Lane letters in the possession of the Oregon Historical Society are to be found scores of private letters addressed to Lane in reference to his candidacy in 1852 and chances of success. Most of these are from politicians of his home state, Indiana, but several other states are also represented.

ceptive candidate and he now became a very active one. He was a bombastic, self-assertive man, and was a born leader, which made him a success as a General or a politician. He had not the capabilities or training of a statesman and his speeches on the issues of the day were composed largely of generalities and platitudes. But recognizing no limitation to his abilities, he placed no limitations on his ambitions. Depending first on his successful military record as the "Marion of the Mexican War", and as the hero of a number of Indian fights in the far West, and second upon his standing with his party and especially the pro-slavery element of it, he entered the field for national honors. Of course the first requisite of success was to secure the endorsement of his own state. This would have been easy enough a few years previous—for instance, when, after his decisive victory over Gaines in 1855, Bush had carried the legend in the *Statesman*, "Gen. Joseph Lane for President in 1856."¹ But with the Oregon Democracy divided into two hostile camps, Lane faced a difficult situation in 1859.

The Lane-Stout faction was in control of the Eugene Convention. The committee on credentials reported in favor of decreasing the size of the delegations of certain counties which were based on the vote for Whiteaker, in accordance with the recommendation made by the minority of the state central committee. For example, the size of the Marion county delegation was thus cut from ten to four members.² Upon the adoption of the report, Grover arose and said: "I am authorized by eight counties here to say to the convention on behalf of those counties, that they retire from the convention upon this decision." All the delegates from Marion, Polk, Wasco, Clatsop, Washington, Umpqua, Coos and Curry counties then retired. They immediately assembled in another room where they resolved that inasmuch as they did not represent the majority of the counties in the state, they would not elect delegates to the Charleston convention, but pledged the De-

¹*Supra*, p. 72.

²*Proceedings, Statesman*, Nov. 22.

mocracy of the several counties represented, to a cordial support of the National Democratic nominee.

After the withdrawal of the eight counties from the convention, a committee of one member from each remaining county, reported the names of Lane, M. P. Deady, and Stout as delegates to the national convention. The committee on resolutions, on which was L. F. Mosher, son-in-law of Lane, reported the following: "Resolved—That we recommend to the consideration of the Charleston Convention as a candidate for the office of chief magistrate, our distinguished fellow citizen, the Hon. Gen. Joseph Lane, and our delegates are instructed to use their best efforts to secure his nomination for the office of President or Vice President, and that we pledge the Democracy of the state to support cordially the nominee of the Charleston Convention, whoever he may be." In this manner, through resolutions, did Mosher very cleverly get a "unanimous" declaration for Lane, in the face of the fact that even of the eleven counties which remained after the bolt, Josephine and Clackamas had instructed for Douglas for President; Yamhill for Dickinson and Benton had voted down a Lane resolution. As far as the published proceedings of the various county conventions show, only Lane, Douglas and Jackson had instructed for Lane. The Statesman declared that these "cut-and-dried" instructions for Lane were merely to resuscitate his political popularity and give him some prestige as a candidate for re-election to the Senate. "The Presidential humbug is merely to catch gulls with."¹

The Oregon Weekly Union, anti-Clique organ, thus commented on the schism in the Eugene Convention: "A factious minority, heretofore controlling the action of the party, having lost the confidence long reposed in them, failing to coerce the Convention * * * have deliberately withdrawn and propose to form a new organization * * * There can be but one object in view and that is an *Open or Secret Alliance with the Republicans!* The whole influence of the Statesman for the

¹Proceedings, Statesman, Nov. 22.

past year has been on that side.”¹ It is noticeable during this period that the Statesman made no attack on Republicanism, devoting its energies to fighting the Lane-Stout-Smith faction. The Union on the other hand, was diligent in exposing the dangers of Sewardism and the revolutionary tendency of Republicanism. The striking political events of 1860 were thus foreshadowed.

¹Union, Nov. 19.